

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for making optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:  
forming a glass core rod by soot deposition, the glass core rod having a core  
5 region surrounded by a cladding region;  
dehydrating the glass core rod in a first environment including oxygen alone or  
with at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and carbon  
monoxide, wherein the first environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient;  
consolidating the glass core rod;  
10 forming an overclad region around the glass core rod to form an overclad  
optical fiber preform;  
drawing fiber from the overclad optical fiber preform; and  
exposing the drawn optical fiber to an atmosphere containing deuterium.
- 15 2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the overclad region forming step  
further comprises the steps of:  
depositing soot around the glass core rod;  
dehydrating the deposited soot in a second environment including oxygen  
alone or with at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and  
20 carbon monoxide, wherein the second environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-  
deficient; and  
consolidating the deposited soot around the glass core rod.
3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the soot deposition in the  
25 overclad region forming step is selected from the group consisting of vapor axial  
deposition (VAD) and outside vapor deposition (OVD).
4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the exposing step further  
comprises one of exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere having a  
30 partial pressure of approximately 0.01 atmospheres of deuterium at room temperature  
for approximately 6 days, and exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium  
atmosphere having a partial pressure of approximately 0.05 atmospheres of deuterium  
at room temperature for approximately 1.5 days.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the overclad region forming step further comprises the steps of:

positioning an overclad tube around the glass core rod; and  
5 heating the overclad tube along the length thereof in such a way that the overclad tube collapses onto the glass core rod to form the overclad optical fiber preform.

6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the soot deposition in the glass  
10 core rod forming step is selected from the group consisting of vapor axial deposition (VAD) and outside vapor deposition (OVD).

7. A method for making optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:  
forming a glass core rod by soot deposition, the glass core rod having a core  
15 region surrounded by a cladding region;  
dehydrating the glass core rod in a first environment including one of oxygen alone or oxygen and at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and carbon monoxide, wherein the first environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient;  
20 consolidating the glass core rod;  
forming an overclad region around the glass core rod to form an overclad optical fiber preform;  
drawing fiber from the overclad optical fiber preform; and  
exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere,  
25 wherein the optical fiber has a transmission loss at 1385 nanometers (nm) that is less than 0.33 dB/km and the aging loss increase thereafter is less than 0.04 dB/km.

8. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the exposing step further comprises exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere having a partial  
30 pressure of approximately 0.01 atmospheres of deuterium at room temperature for approximately 6 days, and exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere having a partial pressure of approximately 0.05 atmospheres of deuterium at room temperature for approximately 1.5 days.

9. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the overclad region forming step further comprises the steps of:

depositing soot around the glass core rod;

5        dehydrating the deposited soot in a second environment including oxygen alone or with at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and carbon monoxide; and

consolidating the deposited soot around the glass core rod.

10        10. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the dehydrating step in the overclad region forming step further comprises dehydrating the deposited soot in the second environment, wherein the second environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient.

15        11. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the soot deposition in the overclad region forming step is selected from the group consisting of vapor axial deposition (VAD) and outside vapor deposition (OVD).

20        12. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the overclad region forming step further comprises the steps of:

positioning an overclad tube around the glass core rod; and

heating the overclad tube along the length thereof in such a way that the overclad tube collapses onto the glass core rod to form the overclad optical fiber preform.

25        13. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the soot deposition in the glass core rod forming step is selected from the group consisting of vapor axial deposition (VAD) and outside vapor deposition (OVD).

30        14. A method for making optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:  
forming a glass core rod by soot deposition, the glass core rod having a core region surrounded by a cladding region;

dehydrating the glass core rod in a first environment including oxygen alone or with at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and carbon monoxide, wherein the first environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient;

consolidating the glass core rod;

5        forming an overclad region around the glass core rod to form an overclad optical fiber preform,

         wherein the overclad region forming step includes depositing soot around the glass core rod, dehydrating the deposited soot in a second environment including oxygen alone or with at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing  
10       gases and carbon monoxide, and consolidating the deposited soot to form the overclad region, wherein the second environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient;  
         and

         drawing fiber from the overclad optical fiber preform.

15       15. The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising the step of exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere having a partial pressure of approximately 0.01 atmospheres of deuterium at room temperature for approximately 6 days and exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere having a partial pressure of approximately 0.05 atmospheres of deuterium at room temperature  
20       for approximately 1.5 days.

         16. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the soot deposition in at least one of the glass core rod forming step and the overclad region forming step is selected from the group consisting of vapor axial deposition (VAD) and outside vapor  
25       deposition (OVD).

         17. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the optical fiber has a transmission loss at 1385 nanometers (nm) that is less than 0.33 dB/km and the aging loss increase thereafter is less than 0.04 dB/km.

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         18. An optical waveguide system for transmitting optical energy, comprising:  
         at least one source of optical energy;

at least one optical fiber coupled to the source for transmitting optical energy from the source; and

a receiver coupled to the at least one optical fiber for receiving optical energy from the source,

5 wherein the optical fiber was made by

forming a glass core rod by soot deposition, the glass core rod having a core region surrounded by a cladding region,

dehydrating the glass core rod in a first environment including oxygen alone or with at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and  
10 carbon monoxide, wherein the first environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient,

consolidating the glass core rod,

forming an overclad region around the glass core rod to form an overclad optical fiber preform,

15 drawing fiber from the overclad optical fiber preform, and  
exposing the drawn optical fiber to a deuterium atmosphere.

19. The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the overclad region forming step includes depositing soot around the glass core rod, dehydrating the deposited soot  
20 in a second environment including one of oxygen alone or oxygen and at least one of chlorine-containing gases, fluorine-containing gases and carbon monoxide, wherein the second environment is neither oxygen-rich nor oxygen-deficient, and consolidating the deposited soot around the glass core rod.

25 20. The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the optical fiber has a transmission loss at 1385 nanometers (nm) that is less than 0.33 dB/km and the aging loss increase thereafter is less than 0.04 dB/km.

21. The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the drawn optical fiber is  
30 exposed to a deuterium atmosphere having a partial pressure of approximately 0.01 atmospheres of deuterium at room temperature for approximately 6 days and exposing

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